

Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative

Partners for Environmental & Economic Solutions

Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee Resolution

April 25, 2008

Coordinating
with the
Counties of:
Arenac
Bay
Huron
Iosco
Midland
Saginaw
Tuscola

Partnering
with
the Michigan
Department of
Environmental
Quality.

WHEREAS, At the request of Steven Chester, Director, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), a statewide Phosphorus Policy Advisory Committee was formed and met from August 2006 through January 2007; and

WHEREAS, The charge to the statewide Advisory Committee was to identify the major source categories of phosphorus loadings to Michigan's surface waters, and for each of these categories, to review and compile the voluntary and regulatory management approaches that are being or could be used to control phosphorus; and

WHEREAS, Based on that review, the statewide Advisory Committee was to develop findings and recommendations to help advance phosphorus management strategies protective of Michigan's surface waters, taking into consideration effectiveness, costs of implementation, feasibility, and the potential reductions associated with the various phosphorus control options; and

WHEREAS, The findings and recommendations of the statewide Advisory Committee were compiled in a final report issued March 15, 2007; and

WHEREAS, In regards to phosphorus in lawn fertilizers, finding number 16 of this final report stated, "Urban lawns often do not need additional phosphorus to be applied for a healthy lawn. Yet, in some situations high-phosphorus fertilizer is applied to lawns, even when it is not needed." Which illustrates the need for education; and

WHEREAS, Recommendation number 16 of this final report stated, "The DEQ should continue to work with the legislature and interested parties to develop acceptable legislation that would reduce the potential for phosphorus loadings to surface waters from this source."; and

WHEREAS, A number of municipalities in Michigan have adopted ordinances to restrict the use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus; thereby, reducing the amount of phosphorus that enters and pollutes our surface waters; therefore, be it hereby

RESOLVED, That the Phosphorus Committee of the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative strongly recommends to all of the County Boards of Commissioners in the Saginaw Bay Watershed that they adopt an ordinance restricting but not eliminating the use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the County Boards of Commissioners pass resolutions encouraging their State Representatives and Senators to pass acceptable legislation that would reduce the potential for phosphorus loadings to surface waters from lawn fertilizers.

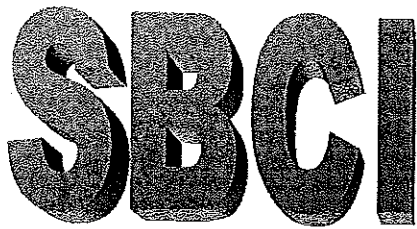
RESOLVED, That the Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee of the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative encourages State Representatives and Senators to pass acceptable legislation that would reduce the potential for phosphorous loadings to Michigan's surface waters, including the Saginaw Bay, from lawn fertilizers.

RESOLVED, That the Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee of the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative recommends to the County Boards of Commissioners that they expand the use and distribution of unified educational materials stressing the importance of "Best Management Practices" for lawns and use of fertilizers to reduce phosphorus loadings within their watershed. It is important that a consistent coordinated message focusing on sound landscaping management be promoted. The messages promoted by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) provide a good example.

Adopted by the Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee, April 25, 2008

Kim Coonan
Co-chair
Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee

Ernie Krygier
Co-Chair
Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee



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TO: County Boards in the Saginaw Bay Watershed
Legislators Representing Communities in the Saginaw Bay Watershed

SUBJECT: Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee Lawn Fertilizer Resolution

As a first step toward addressing the "muck" problems in Saginaw Bay, the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative Phosphorus Committee unanimously passed the attached lawn fertilizer resolution at their meeting on May 30, 2008. The resolution calls for:

- 1) all of the County Boards of Commissioners in the Saginaw Bay Watershed to adopt an ordinance restricting but not eliminating the use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus,
- 2) all of the County Boards of Commissioners in the Saginaw Bay Watershed to pass resolutions encouraging their State Representatives and Senators to pass acceptable legislation that would reduce the potential for phosphorus loadings to surface waters from lawn fertilizers,
- 3) all State Representatives and Senators representing communities in the Saginaw Bay Watershed to pass acceptable legislation that would reduce the potential for phosphorous loadings to Michigan's surface waters, including the Saginaw Bay, from lawn fertilizers,
- 4) all of the County Boards of Commissioners in the Saginaw Bay Watershed work towards expanding the use and distribution of unified educational materials stressing the importance of "Best Management Practices" for lawns and use of fertilizers to reduce phosphorus loadings within their watershed.

Phosphorus concentrations in Saginaw Bay water remain higher than anywhere else in Lake Huron. Generally, the Great Lakes are *phosphorus limited*, meaning that the amount of phosphorus determines the basic productivity of the lake. Higher levels of phosphorus support increased plant growth and greater productivity. This increased productivity due to phosphorus loadings from the Saginaw River and tributaries to Saginaw Bay, along with the introduction of zebra mussels, has led to development of substantial 'muck' along the Saginaw Bay shoreline that creates both an aesthetic and economic problem for area businesses and residents.

At the request of Mr. Steven E. Chester, Director, Department of Environmental Quality, and Mr. Don Kolvisto, Director, Department of Agriculture, the Phosphorus Committee was formed as part of the Saginaw Bay Coastal Initiative. The charge to the Committee was to identify the major source categories of phosphorus to Michigan's surface waters and to identify management approaches that could be used to control phosphorus.

In a related effort, in a report issued March 15, 2007, the Michigan Phosphorus Policy Advisory Committee provided findings and recommendations to help advance phosphorus management strategies protective of Michigan's surface waters, taking into consideration effectiveness, costs of implementation, feasibility, and the potential reductions associated with the various phosphorus control options. In regards to phosphorus in lawn fertilizers,

finding number 16 states, "Urban lawns often do not need additional phosphorus to be applied for a healthy lawn. Yet, in some situations high-phosphorus fertilizer is applied to lawns, even when it is not needed." The recommendation also states that, "The DEQ should continue to work with the legislature and interested parties to develop acceptable legislation that would reduce the potential for phosphorus loadings to surface waters from this source."

Currently, there are a number of counties in Michigan restricting the use of phosphorus in lawn fertilizers. Below are the links to the ordinances passed by Bay, Ottawa, Allegan, and Muskegon counties.

Bay County:

([http://www.co.bay.mi.us/bay/home.nsf/public/6A2BB2CFF0252DC1852573530\)04EBBD0?OpenDocument](http://www.co.bay.mi.us/bay/home.nsf/public/6A2BB2CFF0252DC1852573530)04EBBD0?OpenDocument))

Ottawa County:

(<http://www.miottawa.org/HealthComm/Health/pdf/phosphorus.pdf>)

Allegan County:

<http://www.allegancounty.org/docs/BOC/Ordinances/1014.0 BAN ON LAWN FERTILIZER CONTAINING PHOSPHORUS.pdf>

Muskegon County:

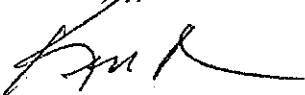
(http://co.muskegon.mi.us/boardofcommissioners/ordinances/phosphorus_ordinance.pdf)

All of the county ordinances are similar. If you would like assistance in preparing an ordinance for your community, please contact Robert Redmond, at Redmond@baycounty.net.

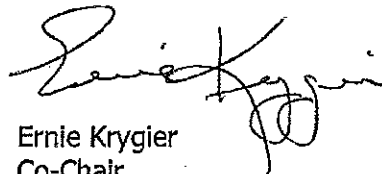
We are sending you this resolution in hopes that collectively, we can work together to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the Saginaw Bay watershed, Saginaw Bay, and hopefully all waters of the State of Michigan.

Thank you for your consideration of the resolution and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact either of us;

Sincerely,



Kim Coonan
Co-chair
Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee



Ernie Krygier
Co-Chair
Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee

cc: Lt. Governor John D. Cherry
DEQ Director Steven E. Chester
MDA Director Don Koivisto

Attachments:

Resolution

List of members of the Saginaw Bay Phosphorus Committee